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# INTRODUCTION

The reader may be wondering what "Islam" has to do with the Bible, as the Bible is the holy book of Christians, and Islam is a different religion altogether! As we shall see, this is a superficial judgment.

The fact is that there is a great deal of common ground between Muslims and Christians - both share many beliefs, such as belief in one God, His messengers and prophets, the divine revelation sent to them, the Day of Judgment, heaven and hell, etc. Outside of Christianity, there is no other religion, besides Islam, that makes it an article of faith to believe in Jesus Christ (pbuh) and in God's revelation to him - the Gospel. Muslims believe that he was conceived supernaturally without a human father, and that he performed great miracles, like giving life to the dead and healing the blind and the lepers, by God's power. Muslims also believe in his second coming. Jesus and his mother Mary (peace be upon them) are highly respected and revered in Islam.

With this orientation let us proceed to examine both Islam and Christianity in the Bible.

The subject will be treated under the following titles:

**Islam**

1. The origin and meaning of the name 'ISLAM'
2. The concept of 'ISLAM' in the Bible
3. The practice of 'ISLAM' in the Bible.

**Christianity**

4. The origin and meaning of the name 'CHRISTIANITY'
5. The practice and meaning of 'CHRISTIANITY' in the Bible.

**Conclusion**

Appendix-A: Mohammed in the Bible (by Jamal Badawi)
Appendix-B: Mohammed Prophesied by Jesus (by S. S. Mufassir)

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# ISLAM

## 1. THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE NAME 'ISLAM'

When a person is born he is given a name. By this name he is recognized and identified. As a proof for his name there would be some valid document. In the same way, to validate
the name of a religion we should look for two things:

- The identity certificate, i.e., is that really its valid name? If so, where it is recorded?
- The certifying authority, i.e., who has given it this name?

**The identity certificate:**

"Islam" is the original name of this religion revealed by God. It is recorded in the holy book of Islam – the Qur'an.

*The [only true] religion (way of life) in the sight of God is Islam.* (Qur'an, chapter 3: verse 19)

*If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he shall be among the losers.* (Q 3:85)

A person who practices 'Islam' is a 'Muslim'. The root letters 's-l-m' occur in the two related words in the Arabic language. Arabic is a sister language to Hebrew (of the Old Testament) and a sister language to Aramaic, spoken by Jesus (pbuh).

**Who is the certifying authority?**

Is the name 'Islam' given by Muslims themselves, or Arabs, or other people, or Prophet Mohammed (pbuh)? Or, has the name itself acquired the usage in the course of time? The answer is that the names 'Islam' and 'Muslim' are given by none other than God Himself.

> *This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.* (Q 5:3)
> *... It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this [Revelation].* (Q 22:78)

This is one of the reasons why "Mohammedan" is not an acceptable term in place of "Muslim", even though Muslims are the followers of Mohammed (pbuh). Why should anyone call them 'Mohammedans', when they already have their name 'Muslim'?

The name 'Islam' is not just a word for identification; as, for example, "fish"; a sea animal with certain features is recognized as 'fish', but the word 'fish' by itself does not carry any functional meaning. This is not the case with the word "Islam". It is not just a word for identification. It does carry some functional meaning in it. Its meaning conveys the essence of the religion's outlook and objectives. It has two elements of meaning:

a- Submission to the will of the One and Only God, the True God

b- Peace (the same root as in 'As-salam Alaikum', meaning 'peace be unto you')
In fact, these two meanings are not separate from each other; they are interrelated. Thus, the fullest meaning of Islam is the attainment of peace through submission to the will of the One True God.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF 'ISLAM' IN THE BIBLE

Do we find the word "Islam" in the Bible?
We do not find it as a term, for which there are three main reasons :

- It is an Arabic word, and the Bible in our hand is an English translation of Ancient Greek and Hebrew.
- Islam" is a translatable word. Since it bears some meaning, it lends itself to translation.
- Many religions of today, being identified by means of names ending with "ism" and "ity", did not exist during Biblical times. Then you had either the religion of obeying the One and Only God, or you had idolatry. People were either believers in the One God, or they were pagans or heathens.

Obviously, when we want to look for the word 'Islam' in the Bible, we have to look for its translated meaning only.

### (a ) "Submission to the will of the One True God"

What does 'submission' mean here? It means total obedience, loving and willing. In the Biblical terminology, it means 'keeping the commandments', or 'doing the will of God'. We find these phrases in many places in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and New Testament.

1. In the Old Testament, we read about what God requires of his people.

> *So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his decrees, that I am commanding you this day for your own well-being.* (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

These verses clearly state that God requires the following:

1. to fear Him
2. to walk in all His ways
3. to love Him
4. to serve Him with heart and soul
5. to keep His commandments

One phrase encompassing all the above points is: "Total, loving, and willing submission to Him." The Arabic term, 'ISLAM', has just this meaning.
If God is fair and just, He will not require something from the Israelites and something else from the Arabs or the Americans or the Indians or the Filipinos. He is God for all people in the world; He is the Creator of all. It is evident, therefore, that God wants man to be nothing but "Muslim" to Him.

2. Not only this, God wants man to be 'Muslim' to the core, to be Muslim every moment of time, and to be Muslim wherever he is, as we read 'the Great Commandment':

> *Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as a frontlet on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

The same message was proclaimed by the other Prophets of God. Examples :

3. David, charged Solomon, saying:

> *I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.* (I Kings 2:2-3)

4. Solomon, addressing the congregation of Israel:

> *... so that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. Therefore devote yourself completely to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.* (I Kings 8:60,61)

5. Samuel, addressing the people:

> *If you fear the Lord, and serve and obey him, and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God – good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you,.." "But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart;* (I Samuel 12:14,15 & 24)

6. Joshua, in his farewell address:

> *And Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.' And they said, 'We are witness... The people said to Joshua, 'The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey.* (Joshua 24:22,24)

In the New Testament, we find Jesus (pbuh) teaching the same – to keep the commandments, and to do the will of God, i.e., to submit to the will of God. Examples:

7. Eternal life through submission to God's commands:

> *Then someone came to him and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? 'There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.'* (Matthew 19:16-17)

8. The Kingdom of heaven through submission to the will of God:

> *Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.* (Matthew 7:21)

9. Even the word 'submit' is used:

> *Submit yourself therefore to God.* (James 4:7)

10. How beautifully Jesus (pbuh) declared his 'Islamic' mission!

> *My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work.* (John 4:34)

11. How humbly Jesus (pbuh) showed his submission to God!

> *I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.* (John 5:30)

12. Jesus (pbuh) recognized Muslims as his brothers and sisters:

*For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, is my brother and sister and mother.*
(Matthew 12:50)

### (b) "Peace"

Peace is used in a comprehensive sense - peace with the Creator, peace of mind, peace at heart, peace in the society, etc. This element of meaning of 'Islam' is not emphasized so frequently.

> *The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence for ever.* (Isaiah 32:17)

Righteousness is the result from keeping the commandments (Deuteronomy 6:25). And peace is the result of righteousness. 'Peace' is the meaning of 'ISLAM' in the sense of 'eternal quietness, confidence, trust and assurance' i.e., salvation.

> *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.* (John 14:27)

Jesus (pbuh) was talking about the 'Peace':

- the Peace, that was his Peace
- the Peace, that he was passing over to others
- the Peace, that was not worldly peace
- the Peace, that was to comfort the heart
- the peace, that was to remove fear.

The 'Peace' which Jesus referred to here, was not a worldly peace; it was the one which he called his food and mission, as we have read in John 4:34. He possessed it and wanted to pass it on to others. It was to remove the fear of damnation, and was to comfort the heart for life eternal. This peace is 'ISLAM'.

> *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.* (Matthew 5:9)

Here Jesus (pbuh) seems to be referring to those who submit themselves to God (i.e., MUSLIMS) as 'peacemakers', because they are called 'children of God', meaning the people of God, or the people loved by God. God certainly loves the people who keep His commandments and submit themselves to His will, as stated in the Ten Commandments:

> *But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments,.. (Exodus 20:6)*

The above expression in Matthew 5:9 is comparable to that in the Psalms:

> *Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.* (Psalms 112:1)
> *Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.* (Psalms 128:1)

Based on the above discussion, one may be wondering:

**How is it that all the Prophets of God were teaching 'Islam', even Jesus (pbuh)? Were they, in fact, 'MUSLIMS'?**

The answer is "YES". 'Islam' was the religion of all the Prophets, including Jesus (pbuh). Their true followers were also 'MUSLIMS'. This is what we Muslims believe.

The fact is that:

- Islam is not a new religion, which was founded or started by Prophet Mohammed (pbuh)

- The term ‘Muslim’ goes back much further than Mohammed (pbuh)
- Prophet Mohammed’s role was simply completion of the original message, fulfillment of the original religion, and to present the final, pure and permanent guidance to mankind, as revealed to him from God.

The Qur’an tells us:

> *Say [O Muslims!]: ‘We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them; and we bow to God [in Islam]’.* (Q2:136)
>
> *The same religion has He established for you as that He enjoined upon Noah - that which We revealed to thee - that We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no divisions therein.* (42:13)
>
> *Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a strict Muslim.* (3:67)

These points will become clearer as we proceed further.

## 3. THE PRACTICE OF ‘ISLAM’ IN THE BIBLE

If it is granted that ‘Islam’ is not a new religion, and that all the Prophets of God, even Jesus (pbuh), and their true followers were ‘Muslims’, then a question arises as to whether Islamic beliefs and practices are also found in the Bible. Let us examine this.

### (a) THE ISLAMIC CREED:

Islam teaches pure monotheism. The most fundamental belief in Islam is the Oneness of God, with no partner or sharer in His Divinity and Lordship. Without this belief there is no Islam. The Islamic creed is expressed in a simple but highly meaningful statement:
‘There is no deity except the One True God (Allah), and Mohammed is Messenger of God’.
Any person who has a firm belief in this, is a ‘Muslim’. This statement of creed comprises
two parts:

i) The first part concerns the Divinity, Authority and Sovereignty of the One and Only God, that He alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Savoir, the Redeemer, and the Deity; and there is none else.

ii) The second part concerns the channel of communication between the Creator and mankind - known as ‘Prophethood’. A Muslim has to believe in the Messenger of God and follow his teachings, because he is the only way to God.

We said earlier that Islam was the religion of all the prophets of God. If such is the case, then the Islamic creed before Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) should include both:

- the belief in the One True God, that none is worthy of worship except Him,
- the belief in the current Messenger of God, as part of the institution of Prophethood.

**i) The first part (belief in the One True God):**

It is pure monotheism, which remains as it has been throughout history. Examples:

1. The first of the Ten Commandments:

*I am the Lord your God,... You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.* (Exodus 20:2-5)

*... all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other.* (1 Kings 8:60)

*Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other*. (Deuteronomy (4:39)

*... and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.* (Isaiah 43:10,11)

*me. Turn to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.* (Isaiah 45:21-23)

*... I am God, and there is no other, I am God, and there is no one like me.* (Isaiah 46:9)

2. Jesus (pbuh) also said the same :

*... the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ...* (Mark 12:29)

**ii) The second part (belief in the Messenger of God):**

This has varied with time as to the specific individual manifesting prophethood. Thus, at the time of Moses (pbuh) it would be:

‘and Moses is Messenger of God’.

And after the advent of Jesus (pbuh) it would be:

‘and Jesus is Messenger of God’.

This belief also implies that one should have belief in all the previous Messengers of God.

Moses (pbuh) declared the word of God to his people. So he was the Messenger of God, or the mediator of God’s will. He said to his people:

*I stood between the Lord and you to declare to you the word of the Lord,...* (Deuteronomy 5:5)

And the people told Moses (pbuh):

*Then tell us whatever the Lord our God tells you. We will listen and obey.* (Deuteronomy 5:27)

The declaration of the will of God started with the first commandment:

*I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other God before me.* (Deuteronomy 5:6-7)

From the above statements in the Bible, we get the Islamic creed:

“There is no deity except the one true God, and Moses is Messenger of God.”

Jesus (pbuh) stated the complete Islamic creed in a single sentence:

*And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.* (John 17:3)

What does this verse convey to us? It tells us that eternal life, i.e., salvation, depends on the following two things:

a) ‘to know the only true God’: Here the word ‘know’ does not mean passive knowledge; it is something more than this. It implies:

- to know that He is the only one worthy of worship, or He is the only deity,
- to know that He is the only Savior and Redeemer, and
- to accept Him to be the only one worthy of worship, and to reject all others who are worshiped.

Mere knowledge is of no use. Satan/Lucifer also knew God when he was cursed and rejected because of his refusal to obey God.

b) ‘to know Jesus Christ as the Messenger of God’ implies that it is his teachings which should be followed, and not the teachings of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, of Jesus’ time. The above verse John 17:3 can, therefore, be paraphrased exactly as the present Islamic creed :

“There is no deity except the one true God, and Jesus Christ is the Messenger of God”.

Another example of the Islamic creed:

*... the prophet Elijah came near and said, ‘O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your command.* (1 Kings 18:36)

By paraphrasing, it would be:

“There is no deity except the one true God, and Elijah is Messenger of God”.

## (b) ISLAMIC PRAYERS / ACTS OF WORSHIP / DEVOTION

Muslims pray and worship God in a way similar to that of earlier prophets of God. We find the glimpses of this fact in the Bible as follows:

### i) Bowing and prostrating on the ground:

- Jesus (pbuh):

*Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed.* (Matthew 26:39)

- Moses (pbuh):

*And Moses bowed to the ground and worshiped.* (Exodus 34:8)

- Moses and Aaron (pbut):

*Then Moses and Aaron went away from the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces...* (Numbers 20:6)

- Abraham (pbuh):

*Then Abram fell on his face.* (Genesis 17:3)

- Abraham’s servant:

*When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the Lord.* (Genesis 24:52)

- Joshua (pbuh):

*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped.* (Joshua 5:14)

- Ezra and the people:

*Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.* (Nehemiah 8:6)

**ii) Reciting** in the daily five-times-daily Prayers, what could be called, **the Lord's prayer** of Muslims (the opening chapter of the Qur'an). Compare this with what Jesus (pbuh) is reported to have taught. Matthew 6:9-13.

| **Islamic prayer** (in the Qur'an) | **Christian prayer** (in the Bible) |
|---|---|
| (Part-1: Praising the Lord and remembering His attributes) | |
| In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. | Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. |
| (Part-2 : Seeking His help) | |
| Thee only do we worship, and thine aid only we seek. | Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. |
| (Part-3 : Supplicating for guidance) | |
| Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom thou hast favored, and those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray. | And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom and the power and glory are yours for ever. |
| Aameen | Amen |

**iii) Praying from dawn to evening**, as mentioned in Psalms 113:3.

*From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.* (Psalms 113:3)

**iv) Offering the prayers at specified times** of day, as Peter and John did, the disciples of Jesus (pbuh), which was equivalent of the Muslim's afternoon (Asr) prayer.

*One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.* (Acts 3:1)

**v) Supplicating, with hands raised**:

- Solomon (pbuh):

  *he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven.* (1 Kings 8:54)

- Ezra and the people:

  *Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all of the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' lifting up their hands.* (Nehemiah 8:6)

**vi) Making ablution** before offering prayers.

*and Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash their hands and their feet. They washed whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses.* (Exodus 40:31,32)

**vii) Taking off shoes** while entering the place of prayer, as God commanded Moses (pbuh).

*Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.* (Exodus 3:5)

*Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground'.* (Acts7:33)

*The commander of the Lord's army replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy'. And Joshua did so.* (Joshua 5:15)

**viii)** Calling the temple of God **'the house of prayer'** ("Masjid" in Arabic), as Jesus (pbuh) did.

*He said to them, 'It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer';* (Matthew 21:13)

**ix) Following the lunar calendar:**

*From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord.* (Isaiah 66: 23)

**x) Fasting** is a form of worship in Islam. It is obligatory for a Muslim to keep fast for a whole month (called Ramadan) in a year. Jesus (pbuh) fasted for forty days (Matthew 4:2), and about those who fast he said,

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.* (Matthew 5:6)

His teaching on fasting was Islamic:

*And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting.* (Matthew 6:16)

**xi) Charity** is another obligatory act of worship in Islam, called 'Zakah' (Biblical term: 'tithe'). The laws concerning this are mentioned in (Leviticus 27:30-33 ). Jesus (pbuh) reminded them of the spirit behind it, which is exactly the teaching of Islam:

*Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. . . But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,* (Matthew 6:1,3)

**xii) Pilgrimage:** The Bible mentions that at a place chosen by God, people should come and glorify His name.

*But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices,... There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.* (Deuteronomy 12:5-7)

When Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) came, he carried out this instruction. Muslims go to Mecca - a place [in 'the wilderness of Paran' as the Bible puts it, (Genesis 21)] blessed by God, where Prophet Abraham (pbuh) built a house of prayer, or house of God,
['Baitullah' in Arabic, and 'Bethel' in Hebrew (Genesis 35:15, 28:18)] – to glorify God:

*... it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.* (Isaiah 66:18)

During the pilgrimage, Muslims ritually drink water from a well called Zamzam . This was the well from which Hagar had collected water for her thirsty son Ishmael (pbuh) :

*Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin of water, and gave the boy a drink.* (Genesis 21:19)

The well has been producing water ever since.

## (c) SOME ISLAMIC PRACTICES AS SEEN IN THE BIBLE:

**i)** Muslims do not eat pork. The Bible prohibits **eating pork**.

*The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs, and is cleft-footed, it does not chew the cud. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean for you.* (Leviticus 11: 7-8, Deuteronomy 14:8)

*Those who eat the flesh of pigs are referred to by God as rebellious people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations.* (Isaiah 65:2,4)

Muslims do not eat the meat of a dead animal, or an animal torn up by wild beasts. These prohibitions are found in the Bible.

*You shall not eat anything that dies of itself; (Deuteronomy 14:21)*

*You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts;* (Exodus 22:31)

**ii)** Muslims keep away from **whoredom and wine**. The Bible gives the reason.

*Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the understanding. ... A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to God.* (Hosea 4:11,12)

*Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.* (Proverbs 20:1)

*And the Lord spoke to Aaron: Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations.* (Leviticus 10:8-9*)*

*Do not be among winebibbers, or among glutton eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them with rags.* (Proverbs 23:20,21)

*Do not look at the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.* (Proverbs 23:31,32)

**iii)** Muslims do not participate in **usury** (interest on money). The Bible commands thus:

*If you lend money to any of my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.* (Exodus 22:25)

**iv)** Muslim men are circumcised. Jesus himself was **circumcised** (Luke 2:21), and so were Abraham (pbuh) and all the Israelite prophets.

**v) Dress code for women**: A Muslim woman is required to dress modestly. Nuns dress themselves in a Muslim way. The Bible says that Prophet Isaac’s wife Rebekah was covering herself with a veil:

*... So she took her veil and covered herself.* (Genesis 24:65)

Not covering the head is considered disgraceful:

*For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil.* (1 Corinthians 11:6)

Another Islamic dress code is seen in the Bible:

*A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the Lord your God.* (Deuteronomy 22:5)

**vi)** Muslims **greet each other** by saying '***Assalam Alaikum***', which means literally 'Peace be upon you'. This was the practice of Jesus (pbuh):

*... Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'.* (John 20:19, 21, 26, Luke 24:36)

In fact, Jesus (pbuh) instructed his disciples, when he was sending them on the mission, that they should use this greeting when they enter a house. This is an Islamic teaching.

*As you enter a house, greet it [say 'Peace be with you' - in TEV]. If the house is worthy let your peace come upon you; but if it is not worthy, let the peace return to you.* (Matthew 10:12)

**vii)** Muslims frequently use the phrase '***Insha Allah***', which means 'God willing' or 'if God wills'. We find this instruction in the Bible:

*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.* (James 4:14,15)

We wonder how many of these practices are observed by Christians today. Then who can better be called true followers of Jesus Christ - the Muslims, or those who call them selves Christians?

Thus, it is clear that what Muslims do is not something new or strange as it may seem to Christians, but is Biblical. It is also clear that Islam was the practice of all the Prophets of God. It was very much the religion of Jesus (pbuh).

Not only this, the continuity of the Abrahamic faith till Mohammed (pbuh) is also seen in the Bible, as we find prophecies, both in the Old and the New Testaments, about the coming of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). This matter is a topic by itself and needs a full and separate discussion. Two articles on this subject are reprinted in the Appendix.

# CHRISTIANITY

# 4. THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE NAME ‘CHRISTIANITY’

We will see that ‘Christianity’ as it is now known, is not the teaching of Jesus (pbuh). In fact, Muslims are closer to the teaching of Jesus (pbuh) than ate ‘Christians’. Muslims, feel that their love for God and their love for Jesus (pbuh) is as much their right as it is for Christians. One must remember that no person can be a Muslim unless he believes in Jesus (pbuh). Both Muslims and Christians have a common heritage, and both should benefit from it. This is the reason why the teachings of Jesus (pbuh) need special attention.

We shall proceed now to see ‘Christianity’ in the Bible.

a) The name ‘Christianity’ - Is it really a valid name ? If so, where is it recorded ? In other words, where is its identity certificate?
b) Who has given the name? Or, who is the certifying authority?

The name ‘Christian’ was used for the first time in Antioch, as we read in the Bible:

> *Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called ‘Christians’.* (Acts 11:25-26)

Who gave this name? Neither God nor Jesus (pbuh).

We can mention the following points concerning the name ‘Christianity’:

1. The name does not bear the authority from God or from Jesus (pbuh).
2. It was given by Jews and Pagans in Antioch (a city in the then Roman Empire), i.e., by foes rather than by friends.
3. The name was given after Jesus (pbuh) had left this world.
4. The name was used derogatorily, as determined by the historians.

One may contend, ‘What’s in a name? Does the name matter?’. This may or may not be a valid objection, but for the sake of argument, let us proceed to explicate its meaning.

The word ‘Christianity’ does not carry a functional meaning, unlike the word Islam. It is a word for identification, derived from ‘Christ’ (like ‘Buddhism’ took its name from Buddha). Then the next question would be: What is the definition of ‘Christianity’?

Now we run into a problem.

- One may say that a Christian is one who believes in Jesus Christ (pbuh). We Muslims also believe in him (it is an article of faith to believe in him). So, we can also be called ‘Christians’ by this standard.

- One may say that a Christian is one who follows the teachings of Jesus Christ (pbuh). We Muslims claim that we follow him more than those who call themselves Christians. If so, then we are rather better “Christians”.

- One may say that a Christian is one who worships Jesus Christ (pbuh). But we can not accept this definition. Why? Simply because Jesus (pbuh) never claimed: 'I am God and you must worship me', or 'I am co-equal and co-eternal with God', or 'you will enter the Kingdom of heaven if you believe in my blood sacrifice'. Not once did he utter any such statement. Jesus (pbuh) certainly would not have used vague language to explain such vital and highly important a matter, or leave it to the people's own imagination and interpretation. In fact, this matter of the nature of Jesus (pbuh) and his 'divinity' is the product of speculation on the part of later "Church Fathers" and theologians.

Then what was Jesus (pbuh) teaching? What was the essence of his mission? We shall be discussing this point in more detail.

## 5. THE PRACTICE AND MEANING OF 'CHRISTIANITY' IN THE BIBLE

The word 'Christianity' is not found anywhere in the Gospels. In the other books of the New Testament 'Christian' is mentioned only a few times (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, 1 Peter 4:16). This is understandable, because the term was coined much later, when Jesus (pbuh) had left this world.

Now, let us briefly examine the beliefs and teachings of 'Christianity'. One thing which emerges very clearly and conspicuously is that there exist two contrasting profiles regarding the Christ of 'Christianity'.

### THE TWO PROFILES OF CHRIST:

| (i) ONE PROFILE | (ii) THE OTHER PROFILE |
|---|---|
| 1. is of a historical Jesus | 1. is of a mythical Jesus |
| 2. that existed during the life time of Jesus (pbuh) | 2. that was formulated after his departure from this world |
| 3. that was original | 3. that gradually evolved |
| 4. which Jesus himself preached and practiced | 4. which is contrary to his teachings and practices |
| 5. that invites to pure monotheism | 5. that is influenced by Greco-Roman mythology |
| 6. that is in line with the teachings of ALL the Prophets of God | 6. that is in line with NONE of the Prophets of God |
| 7. that is simple, clear, and logical | 7. that is mysterious, tenuous, and illogical |
| 8. that is authentic | 8. that is contrived |
| 9. that is originated in the Revelation from God to the Messenger of God | 9. that is originated in the vision of Jesus to an enemy-turned-apostle of Jesus |
| 10. that has the authority of Jesus, the master | 10. that has the authority of St. Paul, the self-appointed disciple |

Such differences between the teaching of Jesus (pbuh) and the teaching of the Church have created problem for the common man to understand the true God-revealed religion, and have resulted in confusion and conflict. No wonder there are so many disagreeing points of view within the Christian world itself, each denomination claiming to be on the correct path.

Let us look into the teachings, found in each of the two versions of Christianity.

## (i) THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS:

For a proper understanding of the teachings of Jesus (pbuh), it is important to examine who he was, in what capacity he taught, and what his mission was. The answers are given by Jesus (pbuh) himself as recorded in the New Testament:

- **SON OF MAN :**

Jesus (pbuh) referred himself as 'son of man' :

*So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, ...* (John 8:28)

*For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.* (Luke 19:10)

- **A MAN :**

*but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.* (John 8:40)

- **A PROPHET OF GOD :**

Jesus (pbuh) presented himself as a prophet and a messenger of God, and a representative of the Kingdom of heaven. He always invited people to follow him in that capacity only :

*Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.* (Luke 13: 33)

*But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, and among his own kin, and in his own house'.* (Mark 6:4)

People did recognize him as a Prophet of God.

*The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.* (Matthew 21:11)

- **A MESSENGER OF GOD** (i.e., one who is 'sent by God') :

*Jesus answered them, 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me'. (John 7:16)*
*... and whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me, but the one who sent me.* (Mark 9:37)

*for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak.* (John 12:49)

- **AIM OF HIS MISSION :**

He believed exclusively in the worship of God, and made it the ultimate aim of all his activities:

*Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.* (Matthew 4:10)

*My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work.* (John 4:34)

*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* (Matthew 6:10)

- **THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS** (pbuh) :

Coming to the teachings in Christianity of Jesus (pbuh), we may confine our discussion to the two basic and most significant issues: obeying the Law, and Salvation.

**Concerning the Divine Law :**

Jesus (pbuh) laid emphasis on obeying the Divine Law and submitting to God's commands - the same thing that was taught by Moses and other prophets earlier. Jesus (pbuh) himself obeyed it and taught others to uphold it. Consider his statement contained in the 'Sermon on the Mount':

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law, or the prophets; I have come not to abolish, but to fulfill.* (Matthew 5:17)

He wanted the people to obey the Divine Law rather than man made law, and leave the hypocrisy:

*You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.* (Matthew 15:7-9)

**Concerning Salvation:**

Jesus' (pbuh) teaching regarding salvation was also not something different from those of earlier Prophets and Messengers of God. He made it very clear that Salvation is through keeping God's commandments, following the teachings of Jesus (pbuh), doing righteous deeds, and repentance from sin.

*Why do you call me good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.* (Matthew 19:17)

*And this is life eternal, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.* (John 17:3)

*Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes on him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.* (John 5:24)

*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:20)

*No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.* (Luke 13:3)

## (ii) THE PERSON OF PAUL AND HIS TEACHINGS:

Let us examine who Paul was, the author of some 14 out of 27 books in the New Testament.

Paul was not one of the disciples chosen by Jesus (pbuh), nor did he ever meet Jesus (pbuh). He was a native of Tarsus (a city in modern day Turkey). Though a Jew by race and religion, he enjoyed the privilege of being a citizen of the Roman Empire. He had influential connections with the ruling elite. He was an intelligent educated person with knowledge of Greek literature and non-Jewish culture.

Paul strongly opposed Jesus (pbuh) during his life time, and tortured and killed many of his followers (Acts 26:9-11, Galatians 1:13). He was present at the stoning of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:58-60). He made havoc of the church (Acts 8:3). According to his own report, he was traveling to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus (pbuh), when he experienced a visionary encounter with Jesus (pbuh), who, as Paul claimed, commissioned him to be his apostle.

Paul did not learn the Gospel of Jesus (pbuh) from any of Jesus' disciples or followers:

> *I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.* (Galatians 1:12)

He always believed in the Jesus (pbuh) of his vision - the mystic Christ, and was not interested in the person of Jesus (pbuh) who lived among his people and preached his Gospel:

> *From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view, even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.* (2 Corinthians 5:16)

Accordingly, Paul preached his own revealed version of Christianity that was fundamentally different from what Jesus (pbuh) himself taught, and different from what Jesus' chosen disciples believed. He achieved tremendous success among the Gentiles as he used all means to win them :

> *To the Jews I became a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law.* (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)

He himself admits to using deceit:

> *But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), 'Let us do evil so that good may come'?* (Romans 3:7)

He explained his position admitting that:

- He was not necessarily innocent:

> *My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.*
> (1 Corinthians 4:4)

- His preaching was of his own founding:

> *What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.* (1 Corinthians 3:5-6)

> *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it.* (1 Corinthians 3:10)

- At times he was not even divinely inspired or guided:

> *But to the rest I say - I not the Lord...* (1 Corinthians 7:12)

> *What I am saying in regard to this boastful confidence, I am saying not with the Lord's authority, but as a fool;* (2 Corinthians 11:17)

*Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.* (1 Corinthians 7:25)

- He invented the mysterious doctrine of resurrection :

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my Gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal.* (2 Timothy 2:8-9)

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!* (Galatians 1:8-9)

For deviating from the original teachings of Jesus (pbuh), Paul was rebuked by James, the Head of the Church in Jerusalem and younger brother of Jesus (pbuh). He considered Paul no better than a renegade and a polluted person, and hence advised Paul to go and cleanse himself according to the Law (Acts 21:22-24).

In the process of making give-and-take adjustments with the pagans:

- the Roman Sunday was 'Christianized' to take the place of Jewish Sabbath
- the traditional birthday of the Sun god (25 December) came to be celebrated as the birthday of Jesus (pbuh)
- the pagan spring festival of 'Easter' was taken over as a celebration of the Christianized teaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- the concept of a triune Roman god was imported.

**PAUL'S TEACHINGS:**

**Concerning the Law:**

Paul repeatedly insists that the Law is to be left behind:

*But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the spirit.* (Romans 7:6)

*For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.* (Romans 4:15)
*You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourself off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4)*

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes.* (Romans 10:4)

*Therefore let us go on toward perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ , and not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,* (Hebrew 6:1)

*Therefore the law was our disciplinarian [ schoolmaster - KJV] until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian* (Galatians 3:24-25)

These statements imply that the Law was binding on Jesus (pbuh), it was not binding on Paul and his followers! Remember what Jesus (pbuh) said almost as if he had anticipated Paul's position of influence:

*For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:18-19)

**Concerning Salvation**

Paul presented a very simplistic formula to attain salvation, in sharp contrast to the teachings of Jesus (pbuh):

> *That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from dead, you will be saved.* (Romans 10:9)

These two versions of the person of Christ and his message ('Gospel') lead us to ask whether Paul could have better comprehended the meaning of the Gospel than Jesus (pbuh) himself did?

## (iii) JESUS' VERDICT

The question need not go unanswered. Jesus (pbuh) himself has provided us with the solution to this question; after all, he was a foremost Messenger of God; he in fact foretold such situations. The solution is to be seen in these following statements:

a) Jesus (pbuh) clearly stated:

> *A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master.* (Matthew 10:24)

We can only conclude, thus, that Paul had no authority to nullify or supersede what was preached openly and clearly by Jesus (pbuh) himself.

b) Jesus (pbuh) did not teach anything in secret or anything complicated. In his own words:

> *I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.* (John 18:20)

The same openness of teaching is true of God's previous revelation:

> *I am the Lord, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness;* (Isaiah 45:19)

So, Paul cannot be justified when he pushes aside Jesus' (pbuh) own teachings and establishes in its place a contrasting theology of his own making, marketed under the name of 'Christ'.
Can we believe that:

- Jesus (pbuh) taught one thing to his chosen disciples during his life time, and something different to Paul after leaving this world, rendering his message inconsistent?
- Jesus' (pbuh) own preaching to the disciples was useless, and his mission in life was in vain, since something totally different was to be preached later by his true followers?

c) In no uncertain terms Jesus (pbuh) enjoined on his followers 'to do the works' which he himself was doing.

> *Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do,...* (John 14:12)

In fact, he regarded obedience to his commands as a test of love for him and friendship with him :

*If you love me, you will obey what I command.* (John 14:15)

*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.* (John 14:21)

*You are my friends if you do what I command you.* (John 15:14)

Then how the Church could accept it when Paul excluded himself from obeying Jesus' (pbuh) commands, and taught others to do so?

d) Nothing could be a more clear and befitting parable regarding these two versions of the Christianity than what Jesus (pbuh) gave. Referring to those who call him 'Lord', he said :

*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you? I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been founded upon the rock.*
*But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.* (Luke 6:46-49)

The 'foundation' could be understood to mean the Abrahamic faith of pure monotheism and the Divine Law - the things that Jesus (pbuh) was preaching. When Jesus (pbuh) taught his people, he compared himself to Abraham. (John 8:31-59)

## (iv) JESUS' WARNING

Jesus (pbuh) warned those 'Christians' who do not follow him. Please listen to his warning carefully:

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'* (Matthew7:21-23)

He also warned the people against any careless attitude towards such important matters:

*But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.* (Matthew 12:36-37)

It is of the utmost importance to know which profile of Jesus (pbuh) is correct. Can Paul's interpretation of 'Christ' be more accurate than Jesus' own clear statements?

# CONCLUSION

1. Islam and original Christianity are not different religions in concept or in historical origin.

2. 'Islam' is, in fact, a Biblical religion. Islamic beliefs and practices are seen in the Bible, fully evident both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

3. The message of Islam as brought by Mohammed (pbuh), is the continuation and fulfillment of the same Abrahamic faith, which was taught by Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus (pbut), and all the other prophets. All of them, as well as their followers, were 'MUSLIMS', in the truest sense of the word.

4. Christianity as practiced today, is but an adulterated and a deviated form of the revealed monotheistic religion 'ISLAM'. Muslims are the true followers of the historical Jesus Christ (pbuh).

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**Appendix - A**

# MOHAMMED IN THE BIBLE

*(Extracted from the article by Dr. Jamal Badawi, which appeared in "Al-Ittehad", Jan-Mar 1982 issue, published by the Muslim Students' Association of US and Canada, Plainfield, Indiana, USA.)*

Turning to the Bible, some may hasten to ask: I read the Bible several times, but never saw the name Mohammed; what is the justification of the title 'Muhammad in the Bible'? Many Christian theologians find no difficulty in pointing out what they consider as clear prophecies of the advent of Jesus. Where in the Old Testament does the name Jesus appear? Nowhere! The main question is whether or not the profile of "that prophet" to come has materialized, and who fits that profile?

There are several Old Testament prophecies which have been for a long time misinterpreted so as to apply to Jesus, which in fact refer to Prophet Mohammed. The profile of Prophet Mohammed was so clear to many Jews and Christians among his contemporaries that many of them accepted him as the fulfillment of numerous Biblical prophecies.

## I

One such prophecy is in the Book of Deuteronomy, wherein Prophet Moses was quoted as saying:

*And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* (Deut. 18:17-18)

Three important elements are included in this prophecy:

i) A prophet will come from among the 'brethren' of the Israelites
ii) This prophet will be 'like unto Moses'
iii) God will put his words in the mouth of this prophet.

Let us look closely at each of these elements:

### 1. A PROPHET FROM AMONG THE BRETHREN OF THE ISRAELITES

These words were spoken addressed to the Israelites. The most notable 'brethren' of Israelites (descendants of Abraham through his second son Isaac), are the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham through his first son Ishmael). Obviously, the 'brethren' of a nation cannot be a tribe or a family of the nation itself, but another nation related to it racially. The Bible also refers to the Israelites as the brethren of the Ishmaelites (e.g. Genesis 25:18).

### 2. A PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

It is sometimes contended that the 'prophet like unto Moses' was Jesus. After all both were Israelites and spiritual teachers. Was this prophecy really about Jesus?

To start off, Jesus himself was an Israelite, not of the 'brethren' of the Israelites, which shows that this particular prophecy is not about the coming of Jesus but about another prophet 'like unto Moses'. That prophet could have been none but Prophet Mohammed.

Following is a comparison between a few crucial characteristics of Moses, Mohammed and Jesus which may clarify the identity of "that prophet" who was to come after Moses:

| Area of Comparison | Moses | Mohammed | Jesus |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Birth | Usual | Usual | Unusual |
| 2. Death | Usual | Usual | Unusual |
| 3. Family life | Married, children | Married, children | No marriage |
| 4. Career | Prophet & statesman | Prophet & statesman | Prophet only |
| 5. Forced Emigration | To Median | To Medina | None |
| 6. Encounter with enemies | Hot pursuit | Hot pursuit | No similar encounter |
| 7. Results of encounter | Moral, physical victory | Moral, physical victory | Moral victory |
| 8. Writing down of revelation | In his life time | In his life time | After him |
| 9. Nature of teachings | Spiritual, legal | Spiritual, legal | Mainly |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | spiritual |
| 10. Acceptance of leadership (by his people) | Rejected, then accepted | Rejected, then accepted | Rejected by most Israelites |

The table shows that not only were Moses and Mohammed very much alike in many respects, but also that Jesus does not fit this particular prophecy.

### 3. GOD WILL PUT HIS WORDS IN THE MOUTH OF THAT PROPHET

Generally speaking, this description may apply to any messenger of God who is communicating God's message to mankind. While that message may come in "written tablets" as is believed to have been the case with Moses, the specific wording of the above verse is a vivid description of the type of revelation received by Mohammed. Angel Gabriel used to come and dictate to him specific portions of the Qur'an which were then repeated by Prophet Mohammed exactly as he had heard them.

Mohammed's own thinking or authorship were not involved in any way in what he uttered. The words of God (the Qur'an) were "put into his mouth". As the Qur'an itself described: "He (Mohammed) does not speak of his own desire, it is no less than a revelation sent down to him." (The Qur'an 53:3-4). Numerous passages in the Qur'an command Mohammed in such terms as: 'say', 'remind', 'inform'; other passages start with such expression as: 'and your Lord said', still in other passages it reads: 'and they ask you (O Mohammed)... say...'

## II

In the Book of Genesis we read that after the birth of Ishmael and before the birth of Isaac God made a promise to Abraham to bless his descendants:

*As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shall be a father of many nations.* (Gen. 17:4)

*And also the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.* (Gen. 21:13)

*Arise, lift up the lad [Ishmael], and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation.* (Gen. 21:18)

Fulfillment of God's promise through the Israelite branch of Abraham is clearly and abundantly articulated in the Bible. How was that promise fulfilled through the Ishmaelite branch of the Abrahamic family tree? After Jesus, the last Israelite messenger and prophet, it was time that God's promise to bless Ishmael and his descendants be fulfilled. Less than 600 years after Jesus, came the last messenger of God, Muhammad, from the progeny of Abraham through Ishmael, whose followers constitute one-fifth of the total world population in all corners of the earth.

## III

A most revealing profile is found in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 42, which relates this profile to Kedar, son of Ishmael, and no other descendants of Ishmael fits these descriptions but Prophet Muhammad:

> *1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; ...* (42:1) [also called "my messenger" in verse 19]

Surely all prophets were indeed servants, messengers and elects of God. Yet no prophet in history is as universally called by these specific titles [*abduhu*, *rasooluhu*, and *mustafa* respectively in Arabic] as is Muhammad. The very testimony of faith by which a person enters into the fold of Islam reads: "I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger." Virtually the same is repeated by Muslims five times a day during the call to prayers, five times immediately before the beginning of prayers and minimum nine times a day during the mandatory prayers. The most common title of Prophet Mohammed since his mission until today is Rasool Allah (the messenger of Allah). The Qur'an gives him this title.

> *2. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth;...* (42:4); *...he shall prevail against his enemies.* (42:13) *... he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles.* (42:1)

In comparing the lives and missions of Jesus and Muhammad, we find Jesus expressing on more than one occasion how disappointed he was in the Israelites rejection of him. Nor did Jesus live long enough to prevail over his enemies (beyond a moral victory, which is a common feature for all prophets). On the other hand, in case of Prophet Muhammad we find no trace of discouragement even in the most critical moments of his mission. After the bitter struggle he 'prevailed against his enemies', established a strong community of believers who indeed 'brought judgment to the Gentiles'.

> *3. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.* (42:2)

Not only was this his distinct characteristic and mark of decency, it was indeed the embodiment of the revelation given to him. ["Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice." (The Qur'an 31:19)]

> *4. ... and the isles shall wait for his law.* (42:4)

The only prophet who came after this prophecy with a complete and comprehensive code of law was Prophet Muhammad. The law revealed to him spread in a relatively short span of time to all corners of the earth.

> *5. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.* (42:7)

People who lived in the darkness of an unholy life came to the light of truth completed through the mission of Prophet Muhammad. Many of those who were opposed to the truth and bitterly fought with him ended up among the most devout believers. Their blindness to truth was cured. God addresses Prophet Muhammad describing the Qur'an: "*A book which We revealed unto you, in order that you may lead mankind out of the depths of darkness unto light...*" (The Qur'an 14:1)

> *6. I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another; ...* (42:8)

The greatest glory a person receives from God is to be entrusted as His messenger to mankind and receive His glorious revelation. Not only did this apply to Prophet Muhammad, but it is uniquely applied to him as the last messenger and prophet of God, as he is the 'seal' of all prophets as described in the Qur'an. It is already 1400 years since Muhammad was sent and the Qur'an was sent to him, yet there was no genuine prophet of the magnitude and influence on humanity to be compared with such figures as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Nor do we find any holy book (glory) after the Qur'an that has influenced mankind, and continues to influence, to such a degree.

> 7. *Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth...* (42:10)

A new song may be a reference to a new scripture in a language other than the language of Israelite scriptures. This seems in consistence with a mention of 'another tongue will he speak' in Isaiah 28:11. The praise of God is chanted five times daily from the minarets of millions of mosques around the world ('from the ends of the earth').

> *8. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the village that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. (42:11)*

Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13).The best known prophet who came from Ishmael's descendants is Muhammad. His enemies, who were misled by their leaders or mighty men (as described in Isaiah 21:17) ultimately embraced Islam. Indeed they had reason to 'lift up their voice', to 'sing' praise of God, and 'shout from the top of the mountains'. This is possibly a reference to the shouting of "Here I come (for your service) O Allah. Here I come. There is no partner with you. Here I come. Verily yours is the praise, the blessings and sovereignty.." that is chanted annually from Mount Arafat near Mecca by multitudes of Muslims from all over the world as part of the annual rites of Hajj pilgrimage.

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**Appendix - B**

# MOHAMMED - PROPHESIED BY JESUS
(PEACE BE UPON THEM)

*(This article by S. S. Mufassir, a former Baptist Church Minister, is taken from 'Impact International', 33 Stroud Green road, London N4 3EF, UK, 28 Dec., 1973. It is gratefully acknowledged.)*

There is an amazing number of things which the Christian reader of the New Testament misses even in the most thorough reading, because his frame of reference and his scrutiny are controlled carefully by official church dogma. My own case is instructive. I was raised and baptized in the Baptist church and spent much of my youth seriously studying the Bible and religious discipline. At a still young age, I entered the ministry. I thought I knew the Bible well. As paradoxical as it seems, I must admit that I never possessed as complete a knowledge of the Bible as a Christian as I have gained since embracing Islam. The reason is that, in general, the Christian interpretation presents a puzzle with major parts missing, and those parts can be supplied only by Islam. The Christian sees the Bible

as an end in itself, where as in reality it is but an indicator pointing the way to something else which was then yet to come. Until this event occurred, the Bible was an incomplete, unfulfilled Book, and many of its profound prophecies could not be grasped completely. Christian theologians and scholars, eager to impress their following, often erred in assigning premature "fulfillments" to those foregleams of the future. When the prophecies actually came true these erroneous conjectures had assumed the status of dogma, blinding Christians to the fruition of their own beliefs.

An exceptional example of the dangers of such hasty interpretation is the standard Christian exegesis of John (14:16-17) and John (16: 7-14) . Giving Christian scholars the benefit of doubt, we will assume that the accepted Greek text records in general the actual sayings of Jesus, peace be upon him. In these verses, Jesus highlights the brevity of his own mission, showing its intermediate status as a link between the prophetic past and the prophetic future. It is significant that Jesus never called himself the last prophet, or even a universal prophet, though Christians later came to consider him as both. On the contrary, here, when read carefully with regard to the Greek text rather than the creeds of the Establishment Churches, Jesus points specifically to the coming of another prophet after him who would

1. be eminently truthful and trustworthy,
2. teach only what God revealed, and
3. honor Jesus by carrying the prophetic mission on to its logical conclusion.

A characteristic of what is termed Biblical prophecy is that it merely gives outlines which become perfectly distinct only upon the unfolding of reality. Thus, we have no instance here of Jesus saying, in the unreal fashion of the Italian "Gospel of Barnabas", 'after me there shall come the Last Prophet, Mohammed bin Abdullah.' But Biblical prophecy does have certain safeguards which make the intended interpretation sure beyond all doubt. The New Testament records Jesus as saying:

> *Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (Greek Parakleetos ), that he may abide with you for ever: even the spirit of truth.* John (14:1,16,17)

Jesus says that the prophet who would come after him would be a true messenger commissioned by God who, like Jesus, would possess a heavenly Revelation from God, teaching not words of his own composition, but whatever God gave him to speak:

> *But when **he**, the spirit of truth, is come, **he** will guide you in all truth: for **he** shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever **he** shall hear (from God) that shall **he** speak: and **he** will show you things to come. **He** shall glorify me: for **he** shall receive of mine and shall show unto you.* John (16:13,14)

Thus, additionally, this coming prophet would not spurn the mission of Jesus, but would recognize it and actually "glorify" Jesus by removing from association with him all the false doctrines with which others surrounded the name. Unlike the Jews in general, this prophet would not belie the mission of Jesus, but take the prophetic mission on to its conclusion. Now, who would this be? Jesus calls him the "Paraclete". We cannot discount the opinion that what Jesus really said, in his own language of Aramaic, was nearer in meaning to the similar Greek word "Periclyte", "The Praised One", and that 'John' – an unknown writer in the second century of the Christian era - picked up "Paraclete" in error. However, until positive textual evidence is available, we shall

continue to give the benefit of the doubt, because even *in its admittedly defective condition*, the light of truth shines forth in it with startling brilliance.

For centuries, based on the King James' Version, Christendom has translated "Paraclete" as "the Comforter" though that is not precisely what "Paraclete" means. Even so, "Comforter" would be an acceptable title for the one who is the Mercy of all creatures. What "Paraclete" means, though, is an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another, one who counsels or advises. The word points to one who would be an advocate for and counselor to mankind, who, as the Qur'an puts it, would be *harisun alaikum*, 'solicitous for your welfare'. (Likewise, in English "solicitor" is synonymous with "advocate" in the legal sense). Another indication which acts as a safeguard for the true meaning of these verses is that the "Paraclete" is also given the title "Spirit of Truth" (Greek *to pneuma tees aleetheais* ). This is clear when one realizes that in New Testament Greek, pneuma can mean "possessor of a spiritual communication", i.e., an inspired person , as well as a "spirit" *per se*. (A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament, by Rev. Thomas S. Green). Thus, *to pneuma tees aleetheais* "the inspired truthful one", means that the "Paraclete" would be so truthful and trustworthy in discharging his responsibilities to the Divine Revelation that "the Truthful" or "the Trustworthy" would be identifying titles for him. The Greek *aleetheais* corresponds exactly with the Arabic *Amin*, and "*Al-Amin*", "the Trustworthy", which was an early title of Mohammed, peace be upon him.

Some hasty editor was not satisfied with the expression "spirit of truth", or did not understand it, and assumed that this must be the same as the "Holy Spirit". The words at John 14:26 which identify the "Paraclete" as the Holy Spirit are the result of this. Such words are found nowhere else and are obviously an addition to the text. Yet, this premature interpretation, unsound textually, is the one generally acceptable by the Church for explaining who the "Paraclete" is! But Jesus has spoken of someone who would dwell physically with mankind, advising and counseling them, in effect, "pleading their case" with God and showing them the sure way of return, by adherence to the truth, to the Divine Judge. He was not someone who was already present, but someone yet to come. As for the Holy Spirit, the angel of revelation, his presence was already manifest. David knew him, and asked God, "take not Thy holy spirit for me." (Psalms 51:11). The holy spirit was present already during the ministry of Jesus, a fact which the New Testament acknowledges abundantly (cf. Matthew 3:16,17; 12:27-33, etc.). It would have been ridiculous and redundant for Jesus to speak of the future coming ('He shall/will give you . . .') of what presently existed.

Jesus points to a fundamental distinction between the "Paraclete" and all other prophets: "that he may abide with you for ever." This is the same as saying: 'the Last Prophet whose mission has permanence, voiding the need of any additional prophets.' In plain English, Jesus is saying: '**Look, I must go away soon, my mission among you having been completed. But I will ask our Lord to send for all of you another counselor, the prophet who will stand as your guide until the end of time**.'

To prove conclusively that "John" understood the "Paraclete" to be a flesh and blood person, not a disembodied spirit or an angel, in another New Testament book attributed to him (1 John 2:1) he used the same term with reference to Jesus: "We have and advocate (Greek *parakleetos*, the same word rendered 'Comforter' earlier) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous". Jesus, as God's messenger, was considered to be a "Paraclete"; the term was thus not understood by early Christians to mean someone

supernatural. The fact is that “Paraclete” or “Counselor” or “Advocate” refers to a human being, an inspired person – which is a legitimate meaning of *pneuma* – not a “spirit” *per se*. In practical terms, the meaning of “Paraclete” is nearly synonymous with “prophet”, with emphasis on the teaching and counseling aspects of prophethood. If Jesus said ‘another Paraclete’ at John 14:16, the significance is ‘another prophet, outstanding for his teaching and counseling.’ Furthermore, Jesus qualifies this “Paraclete” by terming him the one to ‘abide . . . for ever’, the last or permanent one.

There is yet another possibility for the serious researcher. There are numerous instances in the history of biblical textual transmission wherein words have been *added* inadvertently to the Hebrew and Greek texts; likewise, there are instances wherein words, indeed, complete sentences, have been omitted inadvertently from those texts by copyists, especially where the letters of the omitted word were similar to another word which preceded or followed it. In the ancient texts, the letters were all run together, without spacing, so that Jesus’ words at John 14:16 would have looked like this in the Greek text:

KAIEGOEROOTEESOOTONPATERAKAIALLONPARAKLEETONDOOSEIMIN.

Later, words were spaced so that we have:

KAI EGO EROOTEESOO TON PATERA KAI ALLON PARAKLEETON DOOSEI UMIN.
(And I will ask the father, and he will give you another Paraclete.)

The point is that the received Greek text’s “Paraclete” may not be a corruption of “Periclyte”. The original text might well have contained both words, but one became omitted in later copying because of being so close in position and in spelling to the other. Only further research can resolve the matter, but it is quite possible that what Jesus said originally was along these lines:

“**I will request our Lord, and He will send you another Counselor, the Praised One, who will be permanent for you until the end of time**.”

This is not entirely hypothetical; it has actually happened with other words and sentences of
the Greek New Testament.

Nevertheless, there is **no one else** in all of history that John 14:16 *et seq*. could refer to but Mohammed bin Abdullah, peace be upon him. Christians admit that these verses do not refer to Jesus himself, and the premature identification of the “Paraclete” with the Holy Spirit is untenable in view of other verses of the Bible. Further, **no one else** has come as a prophet giving due recognition to the mission of Jesus (“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine . . .”) (John 16:14). **No one else** has led mankind into “all truth” (John 16:13). **Only one man** has received God’s Revelation since the time of Jesus, and **only one man** stands as Counselor and Advocate (“Paraclete”) for mankind for all the ages to come, Praised (“Periclyte”) by God and some 1000 millions of the human family.

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